

ORDER OF THE LA PLATA COUNTY COLORADO SHERIFF
PERTAINING TO USE RESTRICTIONS ON THE ANIMAS RIVER

AUGUST 6, 2015

Pursuant to the authority vested in me under C.R.S. §§ 33-13-111 and 112, I, Sean Smith, Sheriff of La Plata County, Colorado, hereby issue this Order dated August 6, 2015.

I. Background

A. On August 5, 2015, the EPA and State Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety team working to investigate and address contamination at the Gold King Mine in San Juan County, Colorado unexpectedly triggered a large release of mine waste water into the upper portions of Cement Creek located in San Juan County, Colorado. Initial estimates are that the release contained approximately 1 million gallons of water that was held behind unconsolidated debris near an abandoned mine portal.

B. The EPA recommends that recreational users of the Animas River avoid contact with or use of the river until the pulse of mine water passes.

C. After consultation with the EPA, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment and San Juan Basin Health Department, I have determined that a hazard to human life and safety exists within La Plata County.

D. As used in this Order, the term "vessel" means every description of watercraft (including whitewater canoes and kayaks) used or capable of being used as a means of transportation of persons and property on the water, other than single chambered air-inflated devices or seaplanes. As used in this Order, the term "single chambered air-inflated device" shall mean an air inflated device that has only one air compartment, such as inner tubes and certain types of air mattresses and small inflatable rafts.

II. Directive

Beginning Thursday, August 6, 2015 at 3:00 p.m. an official use restriction shall be in place whereby the operation of vessels and single chambered air-inflated devices on any waters of the Animas River beginning at the San Juan County, Colorado/La Plata County, Colorado county line and ending at the Colorado/New Mexico state line is hereby prohibited. Furthermore, all such vessels and single-chambered air-inflated devices are to be removed from the Animas River within the locations cited above.

III. Duration

This Order of the La Plata County Sheriff shall remain in effect until amended or rescinded by the La Plata County Sheriff.

IV. Penalty for Violation

The penalty for operating a vessel in violation of this order is specified in C.R.S. § 33-13-111(3). The penalty for operating or using a single-chambered air-inflated device in violation of this order is specified in C.R.S. § 33-13-110(20(d)).


Sean Smith, La Plata County Sheriff